



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LAST OF MEXICAN MAFIA MEMBERS SENTENCED TODAY

U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton announced today that three of the last remaining twenty-eight Mexican Mafia members who were prosecuted earlier this year have been sentenced by U.S. District Judge Orlando Garcia. A federal jury in San Antonio convicted the three Texas Mexican Mafia members on drug, money laundering and firearm charges. The sentencing of the remaining defendant, Johnny "Gira" Garcia-Esparza, was continued.

Mexican Mafia general, Jimmy "Panson" Zavala was sentenced to life imprisonment while Juan Victor "Smiley" Valles and Sammy "Spiderman Garcia were both sentenced to fifty-five years. The four (including Garcia-Esparaz) were found guilty of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance and conspiracy to commit money laundering. In addition, Valles and Garcia were convicted of possession with intent to distribute heroin and possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime; Zavala was convicted of possession with intent to distribute cocaine and three counts of possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime; and, Garcia-Esparza was convicted of four counts of possession with intent to distribute heroin and two counts of possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime.

"Today, three more Mexican Mafia gang members are bound for federal prison to serve long sentences. So far, more than sixty members and associates of this dangerous prison gang have been taken off the streets of San Antonio, and we hope to take down more in the future," stated **United States Attorney Johnny Sutton**. "Our top priority is to protect the innocent and keep San Antonio safe."

Other gang members who were sentenced this summer include:

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| Daniel Leza, aka "Gumby", age: 49 | 300 months imprisonment |
| Juan Valdez, aka "Fly", age: 38 | 204 months imprisonment |
| Fernando Espinoza, aka "Sweet Pea", age: 37 | 204 months imprisonment |
| Roger Rodriguez, aka "Flaco" or "Pelon", age: 34 | 192 months imprisonment |
| Ricardo Saenz, aka "Cookie Monster", age: 38 | 180 months imprisonment |
| Hortencia Flores, aka "Tencha", age: 41 | 180 months imprisonment |
| David Merlo, age: 44 | 156 months imprisonment |
| Diana Flores Carrasco, aka "Nancy Flores" or "Nancy Carrasco", age: 38 | 180 months imprisonment |
| Mary Elena Flores, aka "Hela Flores", age: 44 | 135 months imprisonment |
| Jesse Ramirez, aka "Chuy", age: 32 | 216 months imprisonment |
| Steve Herrera, age: 23 | 24 months imprisonment |
| Cleto Gonzales, age: 51 | 216 months imprisonment |
| George Estrada, aka "Primo", age: 50 | 120 months imprisonment |
| Rogelio Flores, aka "Boli", age: 42 | 180 months imprisonment |
| Terry Morin, aka "Terry Flores", age: 41 | 130 months imprisonment |
| Edward Cisneros, age: 31 | 37 months imprisonment |

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| Santos Yanez, aka "Puppet", age: 39 | 240 months imprisonment |
| Alfredo Munoz, aka "Tiny", age: 44 | 180 months imprisonment |
| Albert Delgado, age: 23 | 79 months imprisonment |
| Matilde Vallejo, age: 56 | 120 months imprisonment |
| Sylvia Gil, age: 44 | 120 months imprisonment |
| Daniel Valles, aka "Dirty Dog" or "Dog", age: 40 | 70 months imprisonment |
| Joe Perez | 156 months imprisonment |
| Rosemary Hewlett | 96 months imprisonment |

For five years beginning in August 1999, the defendants conspired with others to: 1) obtain large amounts of heroin and cocaine for further distribution and sale; 2) control the distribution of heroin and cocaine by restricting drug trafficking among non-Texas Mexican Mafia members to those who paid extortion fees or a "tax;" 3) protect "authorized" drug distributors from robbery, violence and competition; and, 4) use violence in all forms and degrees to enforce the Texas Mexican Mafia drug distribution "tax."

During the time of the conspiracy, authorities estimate that the organization was responsible for distributing well over 150 kilograms of cocaine and well over 30 kilograms of heroin. During the investigation, authorities also seized approximately 80 firearms and approximately \$50,000 in cash. Other than the three who were sentenced today, twenty-four (24) of the defendants in this case pled guilty to federal charges prior to trial.

This Organized Crime/Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) case resulted from a year-long investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration Task Force and the Bexar County Sheriff's Department with assistance from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The DEA Task Force is comprised of law enforcement officers from the San Antonio Regional Narcotics Task Force, San Antonio Police Department, Comal County Sheriff's Office, Guadalupe County Sheriff's Office, Kerr County Sheriff's Office, Kerrville Task Force, Leon Valley Police Department, New Braunfels Police Department, Schertz Police Department, Seguin Police Department and the Bexar County District Attorney's Office. Assistant United States Attorneys Joey Contreras and Joe Sepeda prosecuted this case on behalf of the Government.

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